

The Golden Rule

Dear Friends,

What are we, who live in such beauty as surrounds us, and who live in peace, to make of the many conflicts in the world of today; in the Middle East, between Israel and its neighbours, in Ukraine, in the Sudan and many other countries? It seems that the nations have gone mad, not to speak of the economic chaos caused by the USA tariff proposals.

What indeed is a Christian to make of the acts of terror and violence committed in the very land where some 2000 years ago Jesus preached a gospel of love, forgiveness and reconciliation. It doesn't seem that humankind has made any real progress since then. And so the first reaction of us all, whether churchgoer or not, is one of deep sadness and helplessness at the sight of our fellow human beings, all creatures of God, displaying so much contempt for the sanctity of life itself and for flaunting the teachings of not only Christ, but of all major religious teachers of the past.

For what they all have in common is a belief in a supreme being, in absolute goodness, in the rejection of evil, and that we here on this earth should strive to fulfil the aptly named Golden Rule: to treat others, known or unknown to us, as we would want to be treated ourselves.

The cynic would say that such religious concepts have not helped humanity at all. Indeed, there was a time when rationalist and scientific humanists believed that progress did not depend on any belief in God and that human beings had no need of the moral teaching derived from religious belief. This train of thought led to the evils of atheistic communism and fascism in the 20th century, when atheistic regimes sought to dethrone the power of God and claim such power for themselves.

There are many even in our modern times who maintain we have no need of religious institutions, such as a church universal, but there are few indeed who would deny the real value and relevance of the essential teaching of Christ in today's world. And Christians certainly believe that religious communities in whatever form are still needed. In fact, surveys often come out with the fact that those who believe and practice their faith are much more stable and content than they who do not. With the proviso that such believers retain their vitality, and their faith in God, and do not fall prey to fundamentalism and extremism.

Religious communities enable people to keep in moral touch with another and to set guidelines for what is right and wrong in the way individuals and communities behave to each other, to bring about the Common Good.

In other words, just imagine a world where there was no voice speaking out in God's name against the many injustices, deprivations, conflicts and inhuman behaviour across so many countries today, where there are attempts by many to seek power over others by war, violence, and terror for their own end.

We may indeed be tempted to despair of situations in the world at present but let us nevertheless hold onto the basic teachings of Christ in our own lives, and make sure that we as individuals live out at these teachings with one another, so that we as the Body of Christ contribute to the overall welfare and common good of all communities and nations in the belief and sincere hope, that if we do so, innate goodness will prevail in the end, no matter what evil forces do to try and thwart its progress.

And we have the example of Jesus Christ to set before us, who conquered death and evil by the sacrificial love for us all and rose from the dead to reign triumphant with His Father in heaven. The Good News of Christ's Resurrection and His glorious Ascension, which we celebrate at the end of this month.